



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

March 15, 2013

Jewel Mullen, MD, MPH, MPA, Commissioner, 860 509-7101

Senate Bill 966 - An Act Establishing A Pilot Program To Study Injury Rates in School Athletic Programs

The Department of Public Health opposes Senate Bill 966 and offers the following information.

The Department of Public Health would like to thank the Committee for acknowledging the importance of injuries in school-based athletic programs. Unintentional injuries cause 25% of all deaths among Connecticut children 1 to 14 years of age and approximately half of all deaths among young persons between the ages of 15 to 24 years.¹ The intent of this bill is for the DPH to establish a two-year pilot program to monitor injuries resulting from interscholastic athletic activities and make recommendations to reduce the number of injuries. The bill also proposes that the department accept funds to make grants available to 20 high schools for the purpose of monitoring and reporting all related injuries. Lastly, the bill states that the DPH is part of an existing task force that would review the injury data collected by the 20 high schools and make recommendations to decrease the incidence of such injuries.

Section 19a-4i of the Connecticut General Statutes established an Office of Injury Prevention within the Department of Public Health in 1993. The purpose of the office was to coordinate and expand prevention and control activities related to intentional and unintentional injuries. The charge of the program was to collect and analyze data, establish collaborations with other agencies to address injury statewide, support community-based injury initiatives, and develop sources of funding to establish and continue injury prevention programs.

During that time, the Injury Prevention Program was then staffed by two program coordinators and an epidemiologist to address unintentional and intentional injury. In August 2005, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) awarded the DPH an Integrated Core Injury Prevention and Control Grant for five years. During the 5-year grant period, the program collected and analyzed injury data to publish an injury data book, established and maintained a statewide Injury Community Planning Group with broad representation of key stakeholders and developed a comprehensive state injury prevention and control plan. The CDC grant funding supported a percentage of the Injury Program staff salaries along with allocated state funding.

In 2010, DPH applied for the competitive CDC grant to maintain and expand injury activities by implementing the 2008 Connecticut Injury Prevention and Control Plan recommendations. CDC

*Phone: (860) 509-7269, Fax: (860) 509-7100
Telephone Device for the Deaf (860) 509-7191
410 Capitol Avenue - MS # 13GRE
P.O. Box 340308 Hartford, CT 06134
An Equal Opportunity Employer*

did not fund the DPH which negatively affected staffing and program activities. As of August 2010, the Office of Injury Prevention ceased to exist.

Consequently, DPH does not have resources to conduct a pilot program solely for the purpose of studying injury rates in school athletic programs. The DPH can assist in providing support to statewide injury prevention initiatives that would address systems and environmental change to prevent injuries and disabilities to Connecticut residents.

Thank you for your consideration of the Department's views on this bill.

ⁱ Connecticut Injury Prevention and Control Plan, 2008-2012

*Phone: (860) 509-7269, Fax: (860) 509-7100
Telephone Device for the Deaf (860) 509-7191
410 Capitol Avenue - MS # 13GRE
P.O. Box 340308 Hartford, CT 06134
An Equal Opportunity Employer*